

THE

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S A T I R E S

OF

P E R S I U S,

Translated into English Verse.

SATIRE the SECOND.



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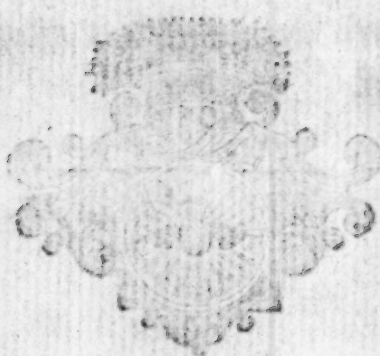
THE SATIRES

OF

PERRINUS

Translated into English Verse.

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THE

ARGUMENT.

AMONG the Romans, it was usual for one Friend to compliment Another, on his Birth-day, with some sort of Present. Your Men of Letters (most of them, perhaps, having nothing they could spare so conveniently, as their Works) generally sent, at these Times, some Piece or other of their own composing.

ACCORDINGLY Persius here, upon the Birth-day of Macrinus, addresses to him this Satire.

NOW it being customary for the Native to pay his Devotions to the Gods, at such Seasons more particularly; the Poet takes thence an Occasion, first of commending the Purity of his Friend Macrinus his Prayers; and then of exposing the sinful Designs of others, in the like Action.

THROUGH the whole, he gives us Instances either of Folly or Impiety: where the Petitions People made were unreasonable and criminal, as the Measures taken for the Attainment of them, were absurd and profane.

THE

THE Ground of these Abuses was this one mistaken Point: Men imagined divine Beings were to be influenced like mortal Ones, by mercenary Motives; And then (in Consequence of so gross a Principle) thought to conciliate them by Presents, and bribe them by Offerings. Whereas (says the Author) the Gods regard Nothing less: They look not for the Sacrifice of Cost and Expence; but for the Sacrifice of a pure and undefiled Heart.

THE Substance of Plato's Dialogue upon Prayer (which doubtless gave Occasion to this Satire of Persius) may be found in the Spectator, No. 207.



SECOND SATIRE

O F

P E R S I U S,

Addressed to *Macrinus*, on his Birth-day.

A GAIN, *Macrinus*, comes the genial Day,
(O note with whiter Stone, it's fairer Ray !)

Which, often as revolves the circling Sphere,

Adds to the past Account, another Year.

Go then, observant of thy natal Hour,

5

Go, to thy *Genius* a Libation pour.

A plain Libation : for thou know'st to join

No Bribe unhallow'd, to a Prayer of thine.

Thine, which can every Ear's full Test abide;

Nor need be mutter'd to the Gods, aside!

10

No, *Thou* aloud may'st thy Petitions trust ;
Thou need'st not whisper, other Great-ones must.

For few, my Friend! few dare, like thee, be plain ;
 And Prayer's low Artifice, at Shrines, disdain :
 Few from their pious Mumblings dare depart, 15
 And make Profession of their inmost Heart.

" Keep me, indulgent Heaven! thro' Life, sincere! }

" Keep my Mind sound! my Reputation clear !" }

—These Wishes, *they* can speak, and *we* may hear. }

Thus far their Wants, are openly exprest ; 20

Then sinks the Voice, and Mutterings groan the rest :

" Hear, hear at length, good *Hercules*! my Vow:

" O chink some Pot of Gold beneath my Plow!"

" Could I, O could I, to my ravish'd Eyes,

" See my rich Uncle's pompous Funeral rise !" 25

Ver. 9 of the Original. Ebullet Patruī præclarum Funus &c.] Imitated by Monsieur Boileau, in his 5th Epistle, V. 61.

- “ Or could I, once, my Ward’s cold Corse attend!
 “ Then all were mine— This Autumn stand my Friend!
 “ Poor scrophulous Youth, his Life is Pain at best :
 “ Kind Death, release him ! and we both are blest.”
 “ One everlasting Wife sticks close by *me*, 30
 “ While Neighbour *Nerius* has dispos’d of *three*!

But that these Sighs, with due Respect prefer’d,
 (These righteous Sighs !) may fail not to be heard;
 Each rising Morn, with lifted Eye and Hand,
 At *Tiber*’s purifying Stream you stand. 35
 Twice, thrice, you plunge the Head, with solemn Care,
 Left Night’s remaining Stains should spoil the Pray’r.

Hark now, resolve me, Friend! (no mighty Task)
 This one short Question — This is all I ask :

What

What are thy Thoughts of Jove? --- nay speak--- be free, 40

Would'st thou perfer Him—"HA? TO WHOM?"—let's see,

Would'st thou to *Staius*? — Bless me, why so mute?

Yes, yes, thou would'st to *Staius*, past dispute.

Why, can'st thou question which is to be styl'd

The trustier *Guardian*, to the friendless Child? 45

Which for a *Judge*, thou sooner would'st approve,

Abandon'd *Staius*, or all-perfect *Jove*?

Well, what you urg'd to *Jove* before, impart

To *Staius* now. Ev'n *Staius*' self would start.

O *Jove*, O gracious *Jove*! would he exclaim; 50

And must not *Jove* himself, then, do the same?

What, because Thunder strikes the harmless Tree,

Shatters the neighbouring Oak, and passes thee;

Arguest thou thence, the Thunderer appeas'd?

If he be patient, must he needs be pleas'd? 55

Fool! if no Grove behold thy Carcass lie
 An object, horrible to human Eye;
 If yet no expiating Sheep has bled
 On the sad Spot, where Lightnings riv'd thy Head;
 Conclud'st thou, *Jove* lies lolling at his Rest, 60
 And leaves his foolish Beard, thy wicked Jest?

Or have thy Offerings bought forsooth! their Ear,
 And brib'd the Gods, thus patiently to hear?
 'Tis so; thy Victims have their Anger check'd:
 For Blood of Sheep, before, has strange Effect! 65

Behold the Aunt, or reverend Grannum there!
 From Cradle, see, she takes her Infant Care!

Ver. 58. *If yet no expiating Sheep.*] When any Person was struck dead with Lightning, immediately the Priest (*Aliquis senior qui publica fulmina condit*, Juv. Sat. 6.) came and buried the Body, inclosed the Place, and erecting there an Altar sacrificed on it two Sheep, by Way of Expiation. Hence the word *Bidental* is by Authors applied indifferently, to the Sacrifice, to the Place, to the Person.

In every Rite of Superstition verſt,
 The ſacred Spittle, lo, ſhe mingles firſt !
 The Finger deſtin'd to Luſtration, dips ; 70
 Then 'noints his Forehead, and his driveling Lips.
 This Conſecration guards from every Charm :
 Now, Eyes malignant know no more to harm.

She dandles, next, and dancing it on high,
 Preſents her puling *Precious* to the Sky ; 75
 Humbly beſeeching each Immortal there,
 To make the hopeful Urchin all their Care ;
 To give Him, partial to her fond Demands,
 Now *Crassus*' Houſes, now *Licinius*' Lands.

“ May

Ver. 69.] Spittle was thought by the Good-Women &c. to contain a more than ordinary Virtue againſt Fascination, or an evil Eye : and therefore with a Compoſition of that and Dirt mix'd together, they rubb'd certain Parts of the Face, by way of a Prefervative. And to make the Charm ſtill more effectual, this was done with the middle Finger. Thus in *Petronius* ; *Mox turbatum Sputo Pulverem, Anus medio ſuſtulit Digito, Frontemque repugnantis ſignat.*

Ver. 74.] When the Buſineſs of Expiation was finiſhed, they next offered their Prayers for the Infant : at which Time, they liſted him up in their Arms, to ſhew him, as it were, to the Gods.

Ver. 79.] *Crassus* (ſays *Plutarch*) purchaſed ſo many Houſes, that the greateſt Part of *Rome*, at one time or other, came into his hands. *Licinius* (ſays the old Scholiaſt) was a young Slave of

" May Kings and Queens aspire to call Him Son! 80

" May to *his* Arms, their eager Daughters run!

" May every Weed, where-e'er the Charmer goes,

" Touch'd by his sudden Foot, become a Rose!"

To *pray* aright, sure asks a prudent Heart:

No Nurse trust I, with this important Part. 85

Be gracious, *Jove*! and hear no Nurse of mine,

Tho' rob'd in white, and prostrate at thy Shrine.

Nerves firm, and faithful thro' a Length of Years;

This Votary asks—well, *Jove* inclining hears.

But hears, in vain: in vain, hears every God. 90

—Fool, thy loose Life with-holds th' *assenting Nod*:

Disease lurks latent, in each loaded Dish;

And every rich Ragoust, defeats thy Wish.

of so saving a Temper that he let out the Offals of his Meat for Interest, and kept a Register of such Debtors. He was afterwards made a Collector in *Gaul*, where he acquired (as *Perfius* expresses it, Sat. 4. *quantum non Milvus oberret* :) "more Lands than a Kite can fly over." Dr. *Arbutnot's* Tables, p. 119.

Another lo! — He Wealth alone pursues :

To get this Wealth, what Methods will he use? 95

A fatted Heifer, first, forsooth! He slays ;

Then to the God of Gain, the Suppliant prays.

“ Kind *Hermes*, come ; on me thy Influence shew’r !

“ Propitiate to my House, each household Pow’r !

“ But chief, thy self smile gracious on my Stock ! 100

“ *Increase* my lowing Herds, and fleecy Flock !”

Thou Dolt absurd ! do’st thou *increase* desire,
While daily Heifers feed thy Altar’s Fire ?

‘ Yes (thinks he) yes ; such Offerings cannot fail :

‘ They must, nay do, already do, prevail. 105

‘ I see, I see, luxuriant Harvests rise ;

‘ See teeming Ewes drop Twins before my Eyes.

‘ O large Amends for Disappointments past !

‘ Ay, now ’tis coming, now it comes at last.’

Thus while he hopes and sacrifices on, 110
 Lo every Sheep, and almost Shilling, gone!
 One melancholy Piece remains alone,
 And for its Fellows sighs with fruitless Moan.

Whence now, proceed these Errors!—doubtless, hence:
 Man fancies Gods have Man's corrupted Sense. 115

Yes, while my side-Board groans beneath the Weight
 Of graven Gold, and massy Silver, Plate;

Should I but say, 'Take here, Friend! take the whole;

'Each labour'd Goblet, and each burnish'd Bowl,'

Strait, o'er thy Breast, a Sweat of Joy would rise; 120

Thy throbbing Heart, strait own a glad Surprise.

Thy natural easy Inference is then,

'Why should not *Gods* love Gold, as well as *Men*?' 125

Hence, to engage their mercenary Hearts,

Thou gild'st their Statues, with the costliest Arts: 125

Hence, from among the *brazen Brothers*, they
 Who aptest Cures in purest Dreams convey,
 Above their Fellows claim thy choice Regard,
 And Beards of Gold their gracious Pains reward.

Gold in our *Temples* has assum'd a Right, 130
 And *Numa's* frugal Vessels put to flight:
 The humble Brass of old *Saturnian* Years,
 Owns its prevailing Power, and disappears:
 The *Vestal* Urns, see now are gilded o'er;
 Plain honest *Tuscan* Ware will down no more. 135

O abject Souls, sunk, ever, deep in Clay!
 Souls, unenlightned by celestial Ray!
 Else, could we, thus, affront each sacred Shrine?
 Could we, to Gods, meer human Wants assign?

Ver. 126.] Antiquity believed that the Gods were pleased oftentimes to communicate thro' Dreams, such Remedies as were adapted to the several Disorders of the Inquirers. *Ideo Medicinam Somno petii. Petron.* This at first was accounted the Province of *Apollo* and *Æsculapius* only; but on the breaking out of *Ægyptian* Superstition, *Isis*, *Osiris*, &c. were complimented with the like Abilities; as were also, the 50 Sons of *Ægyptus*, here alluded to: who are called *brazen Brothers*, from their Statues of Brass, which stood together in the Portico of *Apollo Palatinus*.

Conclude *them* pleas'd with Presents of Expence, 140
 Like *us*, poor Things of Flesh, and groveling Sense?

To please, forsooth, *this groveling Sense of ours*,
 To the prest Olive, Cassia joins its Powers.
This learnt the Pearl, to draw th' admiring Eye ;
This learnt the Fleece, to drink the *Tyrian Dye* : 145
This, the crude Ore, to quit the Mother Mine ;
 While Chymic *Arts* the golden Mass refine.

Vain Arts, 'tis true : but yet, however vain,
 Some Use, some Use, *these* Vanities attain.
 But come, ye Priests ! ye Pontiffs, come unfold ! 150
 In *Temples*, tell me, what avails your *Gold* ?
 No more alas ! than jointed Babies, laid
 At *Venus*' Altar, by the nubile Maid.

Ver. 152.] Boys, when they arrived at Puberty, offered up their *Bullæ*, to their respective Household Gods : and Girls when they became marriageable, dedicated, in like manner, their *Pupæ* to *Venus* : hoping by the kind Influence of that Goddess, to be soon the joyful Mothers of *real* Babies.

But.

But, to the Gods, be such the Gift *we* bear,
 Such, as the great *Messala's* dastard Heir, 155
 From his capacious Censer, pil'd on high,
 Never, my Friend! no, never can supply.
 " *A Soul*, where settled Virtue reigns enshrin'd :
 " Where Justice dwells, with Sanctity combin'd :
 " Within whose inmost close Recesses lie 160
 " Tinctures of generous Honour's deepest Dye."

Such is the Sacrifice the Gods demand:
 A Cake suffices, from a spotless Hand.

Ver. 71 Of the Original— *de magnâ quod dare Lanx*] The *Lanx* was a large Censer, appropriated to the Rich: but sometimes *they* made use of the *Acerra* likewise; (see Verse 5.) a little Censer belonging more particularly to the Poor. The meaner sort of People were content to offer a few Grains only, of Incense; but the Great-ones consumed much larger Quantities. *Datis*, one of *Darius* his Captains, is said to have poured upon the Altar of *Apollo* at *Delos*, above 300 pound Weight of Incense at one time. *Herodotus*. B. VI.

The End of the Second SATIRE.